



District Court
Office of the Presiding Judge
W1034 King County Courthouse
516 Third Avenue
Seattle, Washington 98104
Telephone: (206) 477-1720
Fax: (206) 296-0596

The Honorable Corinna Harn
Chief Presiding Judge

Othniel Palomino
Chief Administrative Officer

KING COUNTY REGIONAL VETERANS COURT ISSUES REPORT ON FIRST TWO YEARS OF CLIENT SERVICES; PARTICIPATION FAR EXCEEDS INITIAL PROJECTIONS

Veterans in the justice system are connecting to health and behavioral health treatment, housing and other services and re-stabilizing their lives, thanks to the focused efforts of the King County Regional Veterans Court (RVC). Founded in June of 2012, RVC is a specialized track within the County's highly successful Regional Mental Health Court. As of September 30, 2014, a total of 54 veterans have been served by the RVC, far more than the County and the court had projected when the program was created in 2012.

"Regional Veterans Court exemplifies the positive results to be gained when courts partner with government and social services agencies," said Regional Mental Health Court/Regional Veterans Court Judge Johanna Bender. "It is inspiring to see our participating veterans regain their health and dignity, and to watch them re-establish positive relationships with family and in the workplace."

The goals of the RVC are to improve access to appropriate treatment for veterans, divert veterans from further involvement in the justice system, and reduce the use of jails and emergency services by veterans. A team-based approach identifies the underlying issues that led to the veteran's involvement in the justice system and an individualized treatment plan helps each veteran rebuild health and stability for the future.

"The best way we can honor the men and women who have served our country is to ensure they have the opportunity to succeed when they come home," said King County Executive Dow Constantine. "I'm proud of our combined effort to provide military veterans with the individualized treatment they need to reestablish their civilian lives."

The original target for the RVC was 15 justice-involved veterans in the first year of operation. At the conclusion of year two, a total of 50 veterans had opted into the voluntary RVC program. As of September 2014, that number was up to 54 veterans. Participants receive behavioral health care and social services from the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs, Washington State Department of Veteran Affairs, King County Veterans Program and other local providers of veterans services.

Funding support for the RVC is provided by the voter-approved King County Veterans and Human Services Levy. The RVC has completed a progress report describing the program's structure, early successes, and goals for the future. The full report is available online at: <http://www.kingcounty.gov/courts/DistrictCourt.aspx>.

"I am proud that the Veterans and Human Services Levy has been able to provide financial support to help make the Regional Veterans Court program such a success," said Francisco Ivarra, Chair of the Veterans Citizen Oversight Board. "On behalf of the board, I congratulate the Veterans Court on their second anniversary and thank them for their efforts to help our local veterans."

King County District Court is proud to serve the veterans in our community and looks forward to a continued partnership with the County Council, the Veterans and Human Services Levy Joint Citizen Oversight Board, federal and state departments of Veteran Affairs, local providers of veterans services, and our community's veterans.

Additional questions or comments should be directed to:

Betsy Bosch, Court Manager

Betsy.bosch@kingcounty.gov

206.477.1692